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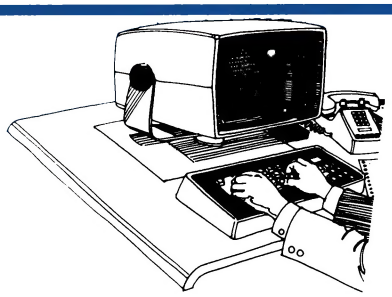

KEYBOARD CLATTER

Editorial by Trevor Bird

It seems a little strange sitting here in my new role as Ausnews Director/Editor trying to think of the latest items of interest that I should regale you with. Following on from Bradley will be no easy matter seeing he is a wordsmith by profession.

Probably the hottest news is who ended up responsible for what following the Annual General Meeting and election of office bearers. This was the most contested election since the inauguration of the Group. Fourteen members nominated for election and eight vacancies had to be filled. The actual election results are available from the Secretary for those so inclined, suffice it for me to outline who is now doing what following the new Committee's first meeting on 2nd July 1986.

President: John Orlay has agreed to fill this position from October 1986 after he frees himself from some other obligations which must take priority in the interim. In the meantime I shall continue as Acting President.

Secretary: Michael Leahy

Treasurer: Brian Carney

Ausnews Director: Trevor Bird

Ausshop Director: David Palmer

Aussoftlib Director: John Orlay

Auspublib Director: Fred Mallia

Auseducat Director: Fred Mallia

Membership Registrar: Keith Rider

Director: John Rigby

The Committee is looking to appoint interested members to a number of other positions and these include Ausboard Manager, Ausphone Answerer, Assistant for Aussoftlib, Assistant for Membership Registrar, Honorary Auditor and Special Interest Group Coordinators.

As more and more members are forced into MS-DOS computers, your Committee has reaffirmed that the Group should support MS-DOS as well as CP/M operating systems. To this end we are looking for a volunteer to chair the MS-DOS SIG. It is our intention to support MS-DOS in a manner similar to our support for CP/M, ie with its own software library made of the best available public domain software and contributions from members, meetings, and section in Ausnews.

Please contact Trevor Bird (4873850) or John Orlay (3092746) if you are interested in any of the above positions.

I am also looking for some assistance in preparing Ausnews. In particular members who are willing to review software, both public domain and copyright, someone with a graphic art flair to help liven up our typed pages and you the general membership to share your experiences with your many and varied computers, software and peripherals.

Those of you present at the Annual General Meeting will know that the AGM was not closed, only adjourned until a date to be advised. This action was necessary to allow the Treasurer to finalize the Group accounts up to 30th June 1986 to conform to the requirements of the Corporate Affairs Commission and the Taxation Department. Allowing for statutory notices etc, we anticipate the AGM will be reconvened at the general meeting in September.

In this issue you will find a survey which is aimed at finding out what you the membership desire to help your Committee provide it for you. The survey can only be successful if you complete the survey form and return it - its no good it remaining in the magazine.

I have received anonomously a hardcopy bibliography on Wordstar and Personal Pearl, this looks very interesting, particularly if it were on disk so that it can be appropriately formated and published. Would the author please contact me on (02) 487 3850 after hours or drop me a disk care of the PO Box.

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A U S C A L E N D E R

General Meetings:

Venue: Burwood RSL
96 Shaftesbury Road
Burwood NSW

Time: 6.30 pm

Date: 16th July 1986
20th August 1986
17th September 1986
15th October 1986
19th November 1986
17th December 1986

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BU-
A DISK BACKUP UTILITY
by Bevin Pettitt

Have you ever found it time consuming and tiresome to backup the latest treasures of your fertile imagination, when, in the wee small hours of the morning all you want to do is go to bed?

Or have you ever wondered if the backups you have are of the most recent version of your writings? What about the number of copies you have of acquired programs. Are they all the same or has some glitch in copying occurred or do you have different versions with the same name?

Then perhaps this program can assist. It is written in 8080 assembler and therefore will run on any Z80 machine with the CP/M 2.2 operating system. And although it is listed as copyright it is free of restrictions for private use or distribution.

This program allows you to backup files to another disk only if an exact copy does not exist. A source disk is compared file by file with a backup disk and where necessary the files are copied. It is a set and forget program in that it operates on the entire disk without user input.

In some circles this utility would be called an Archiving program but such a program usually operates on a date/time stamp within the file header placed there by the operating system. CP/M Plus and others do have this feature but CP/M 2.2 does not.

Public Domain Programs

There are a number of public domain programs for CP/M 2.2 which can assist in selective backup and comparing of files. Most have a special purpose and will operate on only one or two files at a time. They tend to be inconvenient for repetitive use. Others which are more flexible and easier to use do not have the features I wanted.

An example of the single use program is COMPARE.COM. It is a simple program which will compare each byte of two files until a mismatch is found and then display the last 100 bytes or so up to the mismatch. This is handy when you wish to find the location of the first mismatch but it is a fiddly program to use. One has to have COMPARE.COM on the same disk as one of the programs since the filenames have to be entered as a command line; ie one types "COMPARE <1st filename>,<2nd filename>" to invoke the program. So one has to copy files before using. I find it inconvenient.

Another program is CRC.COM. This computes a checksum of a nominated file. It uses the Cyclic Redundancy Check polynomial (an American CCIT standard I think) to ensure a high probability that the resulting number is unique for any sequence of characters. Again the program is a command line invocation and will not remain running to check other nominated filenames.

A more flexible program is SWEEP.COM and its later version NSWEEP.COM. SWEEP allows the user to scroll through the directory of a disk and provides a number of functions which will operate on each file. It is a versatile program and is one I use every night to copy my latest efforts to a backup disk when I remember on which files I have worked and which need to be backed-up. There are disadvantages with it however. It is large, 28k bytes. And it takes about 15 seconds to load, log in a disk, and alphabetically

sort the disk directory. It also lacks one feature that I would like; no compare. I would like to be able to compare the indexes of two disks. I also would like it to compare two files of the same name.

Redesigning the Wheel

Since I had no desire to write a look-alike SWEEP utility of 20k plus bytes, I decided to limit the application to a simple backup program. After a few false starts and discarding of a few hundred lines of code as I changed my mind enroute, the result is BU-.COM.

The discarding of debugged code is an object lesson in good software design; first define the purpose of the program, then follow with top-down design techniques. I guess I will never learn.

Perhaps the evolution of the purpose did have a benefit since I now have a program which I am not likely to further modify (although I can think of a few upgrades.. never satisfied). But if you wish to introduce enhancements of your own design, the code is there as a basis. All I ask is that you change the name to NBU- or similar so as not to confuse it with the original.

Use

BU- operation is simple. The program first asks you whether you want to Compare or Backup, and then tells you to place the source disk in drive B and the backup disk in drive A. It then alphabeticaly sorts and sizes both directories and commences to sequentially check for backup copies of the source files. If the filename does not exist a message is displayed and if Backup has been selected then a copy is made on the drive A disk.

If the filename exists the record count is first checked. If this is the same for each then a byte for byte comparison is made. If a difference is found then the backup copy is renamed with a '#' replacing the last character of the three character file type extension and a new copy made using the original filename. All copies are verified by a further byte by byte comparison.

Therefore BU- is a set and forget program. It ensures true copies exist and will not destroy a previous copy. It suits my method of operating in that following a session of writing or coding involving a number of files, I can simply let the program run while I pack up. I dont have to remember which files I worked on.

The program also allows for each disk having a pseudo disk name. Naming a disk is a technique used in other programs for cataloguing purposes. Each disk can be named by having a file of zero length named with a leading '-', hence the '-' in BU-. (By the way, there is a bug in SWEEP which causes the program to hang if it attempts to copy a zero length file.)

Such a pseudo filename is created using the CP/M intrinsic command SAVE. For example "SAVE 0 B:-WS.001" will create a file of zero length called -WS.001 on drive B. The filename is listed in the disk directory but it does not take any disk space. Most public domain disks are named in this way and are so listed in catalogues. It is a shortcoming of CP/M 2.2 and earlier revisions that a disk is not named; most modern or sophisticated operating systems require a disk to be named (as well as the date stamps as mentioned before).

I suppose one could ask what is the advantage of BU- over simply copying the entire disk with a copy utility. Well often I dont want a mirror image of the entire disk. And at other times I dont want to copy at all, but simply to compare, simply.

If I have selected Compare only then BU- will operate as with Backup and will display files not backed-up or different from the backup copy. In this mode it does not matter which drives the disks are in since no copying will take place.

About the Design

There is nothing radical or revolutionary in the design but I have attempted to follow good software practices a la Structured programming.

All the equates, data storage, and messages are listed at the top of the program with explanations of what they are. This aids in understanding the program.

It is modular in design, having a main logic block which calls the various subroutines. Most of the subroutines have an explanation of function and the entry and exit conditions are listed. Also included sometimes is information on the use of the registers. All this greatly assists in later understanding what you have sought to do with the algorithm. It certainly makes it easier to debug or to modify.

Use of JMP instructions in comparison to CALLs and RETs, does sometimes reduce the size of object code (the compiled code) but as with the use of many GOTOs in BASIC, deciphering the source code is made very difficult. However I have used JMP instructions in BU- for neater coding and better program control; see subroutine DOBACKUP.

In DOBACKUP the logic requires conditional branching on the value of the first character in the file name list (similar logic to BASIC's ON <expression> GOTO/GOSUB, or to Pascal's CASE instructions). Use of CALLs here would involve much more code as well as the JMPs to skip over subsequent code; much neater to use JMPs only.

Error Handling

Unfortunately use of CALL does not lend itself neatly to handling errors. A CALL instruction must be followed eventually by a RET instruction to correctly maintain the stack upon which the return address is stored. Therefore when a runtime error is detected within a module such that normal program execution cannot be continued, one has to set flags within the CALLed routine and these have to be tested in the CALLing routine. This error flag checking requires alot of extra code particularly if much nesting of modules exists. It is also seems logically unnecessary to check the very flags that have been set only a few lines of code before.

To overcome this hassle I usually employ a JMP out of the CALLed routine to an error routine which carries out the necessary actions and then resets the stack pointer to the beginning of the stack. A JMP to the top of the program to a location before any CALLs are made thus realigns the stack with the current program logic.

Alternatively resetting the stack pointer to the original stack and JMPing to the end of the program where a RET is used to return to CP/M, will neatly close the program.

In BU- I have included a series of error routines at the end of the program. Most display a message and all exit through ERROUT which resets the stack pointer and jumps to MAIN.

----------AUG

AUSSOFTLIB
by John Orlay

In this note I wish to record my thoughts about the ways in which this facet of our activities could best continue to serve our members.

Before I get to the nitty-gritty I would like to thank members for their trust in electing me to the 86/87 Committee and my colleagues on the Committee for entrusting me with the task of AUSSOFTLIB operations. This important area of our service has been performed superbly by John Pollock and it will not be easy to live up to the high standards set by him.

The objective of AUSSOFTLIB is to acquire and maintain a collection of public domain software, of relevance to our members, and to make it READILY AVAILABLE TO OUR MEMBERS IN THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE WAY.

From that objective follow a number of practical issues:

1. METHOD OF COMMUNICATION,
2. SCOPE OF INTEREST,
3. STANDARDS OF SUBMISSIONS,
4. MAINTENANCE,
5. AVAILABILITY.

I wish to briefly address each of these issues in these notes and also indicate areas of work, where periodic assistance from individual volunteer members of our user-group would be most desirable.

1. METHOD OF COMMUNICATION

All correspondence relating to submissions to or requests from AUSSOFTLIB should be addressed EXACTLY as follows:

AUSBORNE USER GROUP LTD. ATTENTION AUSSOFTLIB
P.O. BOX C530
CLARENCE STREET
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Communications to AUSSOFTLIB must be confined to soft-ware library matters, and not to include material for AUSNEWS or other services. The reason for this request is to allow each member of the Committee to concentrate their limited time on one function, without the burden of dissecting, copying and redirecting diverse messages for others.

A hard-copy (printed or long-hand) of a request or explanation of submitted disks must be enclosed. Please show your Name, Membership No., Address, and Phone No. on all material!

2. SCOPE OF INTEREST

Whilst for historical reasons the original interest was in CP/M 2x environment (my own), it is the policy of the Committee to also foster the collection, maintenance and access of software in CP/M 3x and MSDOS/PCDOS environments. To serve this policy I need a crew of volunteers to review software in these additional areas. Those members interested to participate, are asked to contact me by phoning me (voice) between 7.00 and 7.30 a.m. on (02)309-2746.

3. STANDARDS OF SUBMISSIONS

Given the premise that submission and dissemination of public domain software is intended for public benefit and not for ego-trips, a few prerequisites need to be observed by the author or submitter on the disks on which software is submitted for publication. These are:

a. Implicit in the act of submission is the

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submitter's undertaking that no copyright is attached to or attracted by the material submitted, or its subsequent copying for and use by members of Ausborne Users Group Ltd.

b. Each submitted disk should be physically labelled to show its format and reference to the hard-copy explanation accompanying it.

c. Each submitted disk should have a dated ASCII file named DISK.DOC, clearly stating the authorship/source, known predecessor (if any) and function of each file, or suite of related files, (indicating how related files hang together) and a clear statement of the environment in which it was developed and tested by the submitter.

d. Include your ASCII source-files; to enable others to work on possible future enhancements.

e. Do not change file-names, if the files you are submitting are a direct copy from another public collection.

f. Try to retain at least the first few characters of the name of the earlier version, if your submission is your new version.

g. In your file-documentation, preferably in a file.DOC, please remember that neither your Librarian, nor future users are mind-readers. Hence include a brief statement of what your program does, in what environment, how is it invoked and how is it stopped.

4. MAINTENANCE OF LIBRARY

a. Disk Reviews :
If submissions appear to merit inclusion in AUSSOFTLIB, they are consolidated with other submissions on OSBORNE-1 double-density disks, together with a disk-review in a WS D file named //dsknam.num . The text of newly created/updated review-files is regularly published in AUSNEWS.

b. Aggregated Reviews and Catalogs :
In addition AUSSOFTLIB maintains concatenated files of all reviews in given categories, and also catalogs of alpha-sorted file names with the diskname shown alongside.

c. "Best Of ..." Listings :
From time-to-time annotated and updated listings of programs judged to be of the greatest utility to members, will be categorized by function and will be published in AUSNEWS. The first of these will shortly appear. Help from individual volunteers with MSDOS or CP/M 3x facilities or with interest modemming, or cataloging, or assembler languages, or memory manipulations, or CCP patching, or BIOS patching is much needed.

5. AVAILABILITY OF COPIES (FINANCIAL MEMBERS ONLY)

a. Standard Format :
Working copies of disks are mostly in Osborne-1 DD format. (The main exception to this is the -AUS1Sx-.nnn series, which is in SD format.) Requests for SD copies are rare,and it is assumed that most of our members can handle DD copies. For this reason the "standard" charge of making and supplying copies remains for the time being at $ 6.00 per DD physical disk containing up to 183K, but if a SD disk is specifically ordered there will be a $ 3.00 surcharge. In other words if you are happy with the DD "default" you get more for less.

[Continued on page 191]

OPENFILE

From: Viv Martin, South Clayton VIC

Re "Ausnews" Vol 3 No 8&9. Re Peter Doyle's problems with decimals to produce cents. Page 14 in the Easy Tutorial section of Volume 3, "Managing Information with Personal Pearl". In a numeric data area use a decimal point to seperate the dollars from the cents, thus: XXXX.XX See also pages 5 and 6 in the Reference Manual section covering Symbols Used for Formatting Numeric Areas. A leading or trailing minus sign will also allow entries to the opposite side of the ledger.

Peter's US date format problem is solved on pages 103 to 106 also in the Reference Manual section. Wordstar (non-document mode) may be used to edit INSTALL.DAT to alter the date line from 0 to 1 to change from mmddyy format to ddmmyy. After editing, execute WELCOME to update the system configuration to reflect the changes.

I may have mis-read what Peter is trying to achieve with his Expenses program, but with DATE being the second sort, as a character, APR will come before FEB and DEC before JUL and JUN!

--oOo--

From: Bevin Pettitt East Sale, VIC

Unfortunately I am not renewing my membership to AUG since I expect to be posted overseas next year and frankly I don't think the cost for overseas contribution equals the benefit I get from the AUG. As it is now I am unable to participate in the Library sessions and the Ausnews provides me with little new information particularly since I intend to upgrade to the Amiga in the near future.

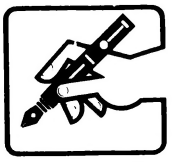
I feel somewhat guilty in "jumping ship" after being a member from the early days. I guess the enclosed (two disks of software and article on BU) contributions is a way of saying farewell. I appreciate the efforts of the Committee members, unpaid and unthanked, for I have been there and done that as they say.

A few comments on Ausnews, I like the clear and ordered format of the software library tyhat appears to have been authoured by John Orlay. I would like to see included in the now standard information page, the requirements for contributions. Also articles on public domain software should have the disk number on which it is available.

Anyway keep up the good work. I think your inclusion of MS-DOS public domain software and articles is the way to ensure survival in view of the demise of 8 bit generally and Osborne in particular. Good luck.

[Thank you for the software contributions, I'm sure they'll prove useful to many. This issue has a few brief public domain software reviews, hopefully the start of a rush of reviews. Please keep us in mind should you return to the fold of CP/M or MS-DOS, we'll be hangin' in there.]

----------AUG



MEMBER'S COMMENTS

The following comments were included on the Membership Renewal forms sent in by the members who's numbers are shown. It is hoped that all your comments will be published, with responses as appropriate. Your feedback would also be appreciated.

671: Continue all present excellent services. Is the Group too small to get an 008 telephone number for the Bulletin Board? Usefull for those of us who have to face STD charges.
[Yes, the Group is too small, the cost of such a service would be enormous. Sorry but STD members must suffer Telecom's toll.]

769: Keep up the good work.

466: (1) Ausnews is vital for interstate (& country) members - so somehow need to encourage more members to contribute!
(2) It would help (Exec owners for sure!) if someone (!) could identify the programs in the CP/M Aussoftlib collection which run on CP/M 3 vs CP/M 2.2. It is a pity FOG don't do this even in their disk doc files on their new series.
[(1) Couldn't agree more.
(2) Any volunteers to tackle this task? Would love to hear from you.]

102: Continue as before. See also notes on page 153, Vol 3 Issue 8/9 May 1986 of Ausnews.
[Now you're on the Committee John some of your ideas can be pushed along. Let's hope more follow your example and put their efforts where their mouths are.]

686: More information for raw beginners on programming and language interpretation.
[There's a screaming need for articles for Ausnews so how about it folks!]

492: Wanted - a good newsletter. Note: unless the quality of the newsletter improves, this will be my last subscription, the quality is now very poor - most of the content is padding - which only needs adding every second or third month (issue). Your newsletter now contains no more than ours & our costs are $10.00 annually - and this has no pretensions!
[Contributions of the type desired by the readership are much more helpful than brickbats like this. It does however highlight a problem we have been having ie shortage of articles. Our recourse has been to use some of the program documentation and also disk documentation - at least it let's members know the latest additions to the software library.]

132: Being remote I am unfortunately unable to contribute to Group Management. However keep up the excellent magazine.
[Nice to know someone appreciates the Editors efforts.]

814: I work Wed nights - impossible to attend meetings, however would be happy to help if still possible....
[Well now, there are software reviews, newsletter bagging sessions, how I did it articles, etc.]

666: Very pleased with Ausnews - sorry I cannot be involved.

163: Wanted: MS-DOS 2.11, assembly and dBase III routines helpfull. Also modeming assistance re hardware and use of programs.
[Sounds like more topics for Ausnews articles.]

662: Move towards MS-DOS.
[Being forced on some members so we may see more articles of interest in Ausnews.]

828: Thanks for existing! Isn't it going to be awfully complex if we keep including more and more operating systems and hardware?
[Yes, but there seems to be a need as some are forced to other systems and with the current range of equipment available. The diversity will probably prompt the growth of special interest groups (SIG's) within the Ausborne User Group.]

729: SERVICES: Please don't let the Group get carried away by IBM, 16 bits, PCDOS/MSDOS, and all the new goodies. They are very well catered for in all the shops and magazines. Those of us with 8 bit, CPM, and no money also need something. Some material on the new stuff for sure, but more on the old.
OTHER COMMENTS: A problem is to try to equalise opportunities for country members; difficult in the nature of things. But can anything be done? eg sometimes things are advertised in Ausnews which are finished before it gets to us, and often notice is so short there's no way of doing anything about it. I don't complain; I know only too well the problem of trying to run a big job as a volunteer with much else to do, no time, and little thanks. I just want to be sure you are aware there is a bit of a problem, so that you can do something about it any time an opportunity occurs.
Best wishes to the new Committee. I hope to be able to get to a monthly meeting at some time later in the year, or otherwise meet some of you somehow.
[About half of the new Committee is into PCDOS/MSDOS so there is sure to be some material coming along, but the other half of the Committee is still heavily committed to CP/M so you shouldn't miss out. We're also looking to foster SIG's to promote greater participation by the general membership.
As regards problems of country members, we try to take them into account as far as possible. If we are not doing it right, please be specific and let us know. If its our advertisers that are letting you down let us know that too.]

694: Wanted: a V22(1200 baud) AUSBOARD. Canberra group all but defunt. You are it!
[Sorry to hear about the Canberra group... anyone interested in getting a Canberra Special Interest Group going.]

525: More info in Ausnews on upgrades for O-1 and Exec etc. Where and how much!
[We hope more advertisers will provide this sort of information.]

593: AUSSOFTLIB is great.
[Thanks.]

326: Keep up the good work.
[Thanks.]

57: Regret too far away to assist.
[Thanks for the donation. How about an article on your IBM lookalike.]

313: Drop in membership with expansion into other computer.
[Membership covers your for one and all (both type and number) computers.]

621: More advice - discussion for beginners and novices.
[Same old plea the the near novices... let's hear of your experiences and problems. Those of us with more

[Continued on page 188]

FOR SALE

I'm afraid its time to sell my Ossies and move on to, dare I say it, MS-DOS machines in forced compatibility with my employer, so here are some goodies, all well loved and in good nick:

EXECUTIVE - 200: original software and manuals, spare floppy drive... $ 1250.00

EXECUTIVE XT-400: 1x400k floppy, 11Mb internal hard disk, spare 400k floppy, lots of software including original and original manuals... $ 2750.00

INOVA 500 with SKEYS: 512k byte memory upgrade for Osborne Executive. Comes with RAMdisk and print spooler software as well as that fabuluous utility SKEYS... $ 675.00

MODEM: Sendata 700 acoustic coupler configured for Osborne 1... $ 95.00

Phone Trevor Bird on (02) 487 3850 (between 7.30 pm and 10.00 pm)

+++++

384K Drive C for Osborne 1, complete with Supercalc 2 Supersize and manuals. This is the best way to supercharge your O-1... $650.00 or ONO

dBase II version 2.43 with Ashton Tate manual... $ 200.00

These are no longer required as I too have moved to MS-DOS.

Phone Terry Bellair (03) 861 5852

Like other Ausborne members who cut their teeth on CP/M I am being forced to sell our beloved Executives (2) as a result of my employer deciding to adopt the MS-DOS system for our business operations.

The news is not all bad, however, as we have decided to standardise on the Osborne MS-DOS machines and today the Osborne Logo is becoming quite prominent around our company.

EXECUTIVE - 100: (2) - original manuals and software.

KAGA AMBER SCREEN (1)

Drive C 384k RAMDISK (1) with SuperSize SuperCalc2.

In addition we have a considerable amount of business oriented software (Basic Compiler, dBase II, MediaMaster, WP Workshop, etc) negotiable on acceptance of the original supplier's conditions.

For information, inquiries, etc contact Ken Sparrow on (02) 887 1991 (W) or (02) 412 3344 (H).

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PORTABLE COMPANION: Most issues from the rare(?) Issue No 1 June/July 1982 to Issue No 15 January/February 1985, new condition. $ 5.00 per issue (plus postage if required).
R. Brown (02) 888 2945 (ah)

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GET INTO 16-BIT MS-DOS
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A = Entry Level System
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AUGUST 1986 **AUSSHOP CATALOGUE AND ORDER FORM**

CODE No	ITEM DESCRIPTION	QTY	RRP	MBR'S DISC.	WEIGHT in Kg	QTY REQ'D	TOTAL COST
01	ADAPTOR - Monitor	each	12.00	10.00	0.030		
05	BINDERS - AUSNEWS Holds 12 issues	each	9.10	7.80	0.500		
10	BOOKS - Supercalc Pocket Book	each	4.00	3.00	0.020		
15	- AUSNEWS Volume 1. Complete.	each	18.00	15.00	0.700		
45	DISKS - BOXES - Plastic .(10s).	each	4.00	2.00	0.120		
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THE WORST SYMPTOMS OF REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURIES

ARE THOSE WHO SAY IT'S ALL IN THE MIND ...

Bradley de Vere-Wynne

Alongside the wonderful advantages and opportunites afforded us with the dizzy development of computer technology has trotted an insidious travelling companion. In many ways that companion has been dormant, and then with disquieting suddenness, it reveals itself. Many choose to ignore its presence and plod on, tapping away at their computers; others withdraw completely, shaken by the physiological manifestations (and they can indeed be scary).

Mention the term "RSI" to someone who has been inflicted with the disorder and a curious thing happens. Invariably their right arm comes up and is massaged as if sore; else that arm is clasped across the chest by the left. It's almost instinctive: a salute of sorts to modern times.

Those of us who work in office environments can hardly have escaped a conversation about or an example of that brace of disorders grouped under the general term RSI. Speak to many managers and they will tell you, with some justified scepticism, that the syndrome seems to have come on "all of a sudden" ... almost as a fad suddenly arrives. Speak to those in minute-by-minute contact with keyboards and the story is somewhat different. There is much to fear and much to be lost through RSI. We as computer aficionados have an obligation to disseminate a little good sense about the problem. It is a real problem: bloody mindedness can cost both sides -- in lost earnings and lost productivity.

RSI, or Occupational Overuse Syndrome is, according to an excellent booklet published jointly some years ago by the Australian Journalists Association and the Metropolitan Daily Newspaper Publishers, a general term that includes tenosynovitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, epicondylitits and similar complaints associated with muscles and tendons.

The following points may be obvious but should be stated:

IT IS important to realise that RSI is **not** an infectious **disease.**

SUCH injuries are ailments which often result from excessive or accumulated static overload (constant muscle tension) and/or dynamic overload (repeated muscle tension) of the muscles, joints, tendons and nerves.

THE symptoms are recurrent or persistent feelings of tiredness or discomfort, "heaviness", weakness and, initially, tenderness around affected areas. These are the early warning signs which, if ignored, may progress to aching and/or pain in the neck, shoulders, upper arms, forearms, wrists, fingers or a combination of these.

TENDERNESS, swelling and sensations of pins and needles may or may not be present.

RSI injuries are similar to those athletes suffer when they train too hard or have sudden changes in exercise loads. It's often easy to detect athletes' problems early and to take appropriate action. Similarly, with early action, injuries heal rapidly.

IGNORE early signs and greater, more permanent problems arise. A colleague of this writer is still, six months after initial diagnosis, unable to tie his shoe laces; for a good many weeks another was unable to raise his arm to wash his hair under the shower ... it gets down to those basic things. Consistent inattention to some basic guidelines can have the same result: you don't have to be pounding away at a keyboard eight hours a day to get RSI ...

So what causes it? Five broad culprits have been isolated, but they shouldn't be taken as the end of the possibilities:

TIREDNESS and/or discomfort -- Tired, vaguely aching neck/shoulders/arms/hands/fingers which persist for more than a couple of days. This may commence when you begin work or soon after and ease off during rest breaks or if you change tasks at work.

If you have started a new job or returned from leave these feelings may just be your muscles becoming conditioned -- but should they persist beyond a few days you should seek advice from a physiotherapist or doctor specialising in musculoskeletal injuries, occupational health nurse or your work supervisor who will know what steps to take.

RECURRENT muscle tightness and stiffness.

PERSISTENT feelings of "heaviness" or weakness in your neck, shoulders or arms.

PERSISTENT tender spots in the muscles of the neck, shoulders or arms.

INTERMITTENT aching or pains associated with work -- these feelings are often ignored by people who think "it won't happen to me". Don't be fooled; it may well happen to you although it can easily be avoided by being aware of the early signs and potential causes, reporting them and taking early action. In my trade, journalism, it's the cocky ones who've ended up with RSI to some degree. Your humble writer thought he was the cautious type and ignored -- rationalised -- those early signs until I really had a problem. Try an experiment: put your handwriting arm in a sling for a day and try to function normally. Honestly, the ramifications are insidious and made even more so by the frustration of the source of the problem.

And what is that source? The simple answer is no one exactly knows what causes RSI. Of course there are many factors, including those of normal day living (In my case one of the causes was isolated to a curious habit of sleeping on my right arm, which perhaps exacerbated the condition slowly developing in my work environment.) Consider these in relation to your job:

RESTRICTED, awkward or incorrect work postures.

THE number of repeated movements.

STATIC muscle loading (constant tension -- muscles not "pumping" or moving).

LENGTH of time without rest from repetitive movement at work -- as well as away from work.

EXCESSIVE effort used, such as banging keys too hard.

INADEQUATE keyboard technique and workstation adjustment, or failure to report symptoms promptly.

A SHARP sudden increase in effort or excessive work load which can include overtime.

UNSUITABLE workstation design or adjustment.

In a future article, some self-help techniques will

[Continued on page 191]

[Continued from page 184]
experience need prompting on what your problems are.]

925: Provide for DOS equipment. We need to diversify for survival.
[We are encouraging Special Intwerest Groups for MS-DOS and other interests to encourage more member participation and hence growth.]

672: Happy with the way the club operates and the hints in the magazine. Articles are good broad range of abilities but basic guides for new learners need to be constantly repeated in all fields.
[Thanks for the congrats. We will try and make a point of including more basics in Ausnews, but we need more contributions from beginners in the way of queries or problems to give us ideas on where help is required.]

31: Just what it does now. Congratulations and thanks.
[Thanks, it helps to know we're hitting the nail on the head occasionally.]

927: AUG is good.

673: A. I would like to be of some assistance but it is difficult for me to think of any way that I can be useful at this distance (Victoria), any suggestions would be welcome and be given due consideration.

B. The following is more of a suggestion regarding the magazine rather then the group, however the group could encourage what I am suggesting.

For members living far from the major centres 'non-commercial' information is very hard to obtain, even bulletin boards are too expensive for constant use.

The type of information I am reffering to as 'non-commercial' is such items as, what upgrades are available and where to obtain them (this type of thing, because it is cheap and has a limited market is frequently not advertised), 'home-brew' ideas, odd applications that members have used their computer for, the names of members who have developed an experise in some particular area and are willing to help other members and so on.

Much information of this nature must be passed around verbally at meetings and at other social contacts. If the Group could actively encourage people to put this into print, and thence into the magazine it would be of enormous assistance. This could be done by reminding people at each and every meeting and suggesting that they write down everything they talk about over supper etc. A scribbled note is all that it requires, somebody may have the task later of following it up and putting it into a form suitable for print. (Maybe I just found a job - see 'A' above!)

I hope this leads to something----

[I think you did answer your own question with your suggestion. We are always encouraging people to put down in print, or preferably on disk in Wordstar 'D' format. (The editor hates re-typing what others have obviously already typed, his time is already over committed!) I look forward to yours, and everyone else's queries, way I did it's, etc.]

----------AUG

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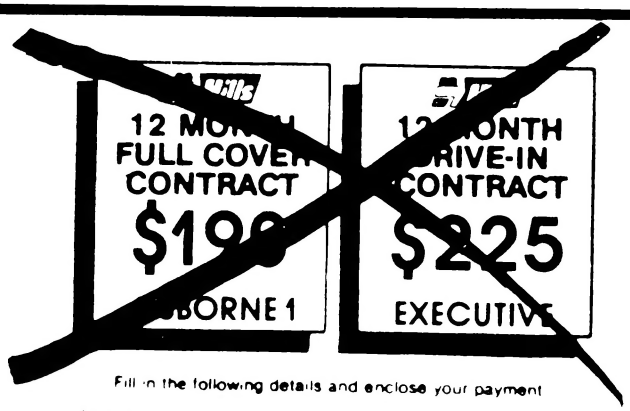

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VIATEL – SOME INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS

by Bradley Wynne

The waves of evolution which led to that curious species known by the delightfully twee name of "communications computer" has an interesting analogy elsewhere in our technological development. In the beginning was the printed word, and long and nobly has she discharged her duty as a medium of communication. That era is not yet completed history (a personal bias; pardon) but we're talking electronic media here, so perhaps we'd better take up the story from the age when the wireless ruled supreme in an art deco world. After that, for some as yet unabsolved sin, we invented television and in a significant way an abused innocence was lost altogether. Regardless of our personal beliefs, in that we had uncorked an ambiguous genie. And what we had created we dubbed, collectively, broadcasting.

As computers began to glow and hum and wink and shrink, the visions of reality began to envelop even the wildest imaginations of science fiction: was it possibe this computer science had no bounds? Suddenly computers at home were possible. Imagine that. And with even dizzier speed (haste?) those computers were being connected with other, remote, computers, and something magical occurred, equal to, perhaps surpassing, the first words squeaked out to the world from a primitive wireless transmitter and the first blurry images on a cathode ray tube. That magical thing? By developing the ability to "interface" machines, we opened up the possibilities of competing with radio and television as prime dissemenators of information -- to that point the top-drawer communicators on the block.

We're in the early (?) stages of that evolution right now, so it's difficult to speculate which way it'll all go. Somehow a sense abounds that people don't like to go too far with technology: quadrophonic sound fizzed; home video games gave up trying to find new ways of destroying the invaders from space; and Teletext is struggling hard to keep people from falling asleep. Further, the couple of comprehensive popular news/information systems based on both television and computer technology have left fingers smarting clear across corporate America. No pessimism intended here, but the signs floating on the wind could well be pointing to that advertising executive nightmare known as consumer resistance. We'll see. In the meantime, computers will continue to burr down telephone lines at each other and the lines of demarkation among the radio and television (the bits that are overtly relevant like news and information) and computers will continue being fuzzy.

Which is all a roundabout way of talking about Viatel, the first computer-based data facility popularly available in this country catering for those whose needs or budget do not extend significantly to those heavies dealing with foreign climes, such as Minerva. In a role of shifting information, Viatel means to move much and keep it reasonably cheap. That is a touchy point, discussed below. But whereas radio and television are one-way communicators, Viatel is more, much more.

The first thing to note when dealing with the Telecom behemoth is the curious way it seems to make its Viatel promotional material look and feel like travel brochures to faraway places: full of words like "vital" and "simple", instant and "proven". It is unfortunate that Telecom seems to have pitched this material at the business consumer with little time to assimilate and decide on such an investment. Unfortunate because the entire other market out here, we home computer boffins, need more information on which to base our decisions, especially if it means a hard cash outlay every time we fire up the system. Paying our dollars and hoping for the best is, comparably, a bit like buying a set of encyclopedias and hoping they're in English. But we shall persevere.

Like all things, wiring up to Viatel requires a rudimentary cost-benefit analysis, a process also known as rationalising the expense so that others with a say in the family purse strings don't get too peeved. At recent count, Viatel cost 16 cents flagfall (the cost of a telephone call, astronomically more if you live away from the big smoke) and eight cents a minute (8am-6pm EST, five cents at other times). That's about $3/hour outside peak times plus telephone charges. In addition, the service charges five cents for each frame sent to other Viatel users and service providers dip in for a cut on some of the info available (but not all of it). The telex service available thru Viatel (obviating the need to have one of those pesky machines clattering away in the corner) costs $1.75 for each frame sent. If you're a heavy user of telex (journos, for example are notorious for clocking up inordinate amounts of expense in this regard) then this facility would make it all worthwhile. But I'm getting a little ahead of myself. Think about those charges for a moment. Remember when you first got your computer? Remember how whole evenings were swallowed up in the endeavour of educational play? With Viatel there is no diligent SYSOP or program eager to log you off when your time has expired and those dreaded orange-coloured bills that plague us quarterly can taint the experience thoroughly.

One could argue endlessly as to the justification of this cost to Telecom. Clearly there are different cases for business and personal users, but one gets the idea that the national communicator is encouraging business use at the real expense of the home market: witness the recent announcement of increased telephone charges for local calls and concessional rates for trunk routes -- i.e. where business traffic is heaviest; witness the dazzling technological advancements occurring in Telecom laboratories and soon to be implemented in the field -- again the benefit to domestic consumers will go little beyond telephones that make novel tomes when "dialling" a number.

The real benefit lies with those consumers requiring data links measured in megabits/sec. Not you and me, Joe. Not for a long time yet. But whatever the rationale, the costs exist, and when we're added those to the initial cost of a 1200/75 modem and application software (available, for example for CP/M Osbornes thru Kevin Bean at Sydney's J&K Technical Services for a quite realistic cost) we may find that Viatel is a little beyond the mere curiousity some have found and is in fact **viable.**

If this seems like a long-winded way of introducing Viatel, then an important philosophical point needs to be made clearer: too much of the available technology is tapping into an ethos, a mentality if you like, that if it's there for computers it must be useful therefore it must be used. That was the way with many cheapie computers; and there are many cheapie computers sharing company with old boots in the bottom of closets.

In later articles, we'll describe a session or two with Viatel and put all those free and expensive services through their paces. If you have had experiences with Viatel that we can share, drop us a line.

----------AUG

ASBORNE 01 DOUBLE SIDED UPGRADE
by Mayling Hargreaves

In the April 1986 issue of the Ausnews there was an article on page 129 about J & K Technical Services, where a double sided disk drive upgrade was mentioned.

Following discussion with Kevin Bean I had my 3.5 year old 01 modified. It already had an 80 col. Screen-Pac, put in 3 years ago. Two Tandon disk drives were installed together with a new ROM and new operating system software provided.

The disk drives have a capacity of 384K each and are quieter than the Siemens drives. An unexpected bonus is that programs run quicker. This is particularly noticeable with Wordstar. At the time, mid-May 1986, the new drives cost $699 fitted. They have already partly paid for themselves by reformatting many single sided disks into double sided double density. Even the oldest disks, single sided single density, reformatted without trouble.

The software is AVBIOS from A.V. Software of Hawker, ACT. The programs provided were SETBIOS, SETUPAV, SUPACOPY, MOVCPMAV, ROLLDISK, PRINTKEY, SD, SCREEN & PIP.

SETBIOS converts the original operating system to the new one.

SETUPAV is a replacement for both the original SETUP and SYSGEN programs, with considerable enhancements. It can configure the disk to boot up the program the user chooses, thus eliminating AUTOST. Any of the keys on the keyboard can be configured as function keys as well as the original Osborne set.

The operating system can be configured to recognise a number of different disk types, not only the new double sided system and the Osborne single and double density single sided disks, but others as well such as Kaypro II, Bondwell, Microbee and IBM CPM/86. About 2 dozen different disk types are offered. However the more disk types are included the less space there is to include function key specifications. If just the 3 basic disk types are included a large amount of space is available for function key use. In addition the RS232 port can be configured.

SUPACOPY is the new copying and formatting facility. It is possible to format many different disk types. A useful touch is that the format is asked for before the drive so that if several disks are being formatted there is only one key push needed.

MOVCPMAV is a replacement for the original MOVCPM program.

ROLLDISK is the program which provides the information to SETUPAV to allow recognition of different disk types. It is also possible to design your own.

PRINTKEY prints out a list of the function keys.

SD is directory program. SD-41.DOC gives the additonal commands which can be used with SD.

SCREEN changes the screen width.

PIP can now reset all disks and repeat the last command.

All this comes with an A5 instruction manual from A.V. Software which is clear and concise and does not assume the user is computer literate. The use of the new software is carefully explained and where necessary the commands shown as they should be typed. It also has an interesting chapter on disk structures in connection with the ROLLDISK program.

A small matter not mentioned in the manual. For those who use an Epson printer, it should be initialised with "²R" to turn off condensed print which the system automatically sets up.

----------AUG

CBASIC PROGRAMMING ERROR CODES
by P. Newman, ADOG

Reprinted from an early ADOG Magazine.

For some time now I have been actively programming in CBASIC (using the great editor called WordStar) and as all may know from developing programs, problems always arise and Error Codes result. No problem you say, just look them up in the manual and your off and running again.

For some reason, however, certain COMPILER AND RUNTIME error codes have NOT been listed in the Osborne Executive Manual, and some were also not listed in an excellent book called "Cbasic User Guide" by Adam Osborne, Gordon Eubanks Jr. and Martin McNiff, published by Osborne/McGraw-Hill.

With no explanation of the error type your chnaces of "fullfillment" in getting your program running successfully is frustrated. The following is a list of error codes I have found missing. This may save other programmers much time and frustration in trying to debug CBASIC programs.

COMPILER ERRORS

MF A multiple line function may not be called by itself.

SD A second SAVEMEM sataement was encountered. A program may have only one SAVEMEM statement.

RUNTIME ERROR CODES

AE A DIM statement was not executed.

NC Source program contains a rweal constant outside the range of CBASIC real numbers.

NS An attempt was made to print a string with a PRINT USING statement but there was not a string field in the USING string.

It is not known if the information is lacking from the Osborne 1 manuals but it couldn't be found in the Osborne Executive Manuals. This information was finally obtained from "CBASIC A Reference Manual" by Compiler Systems, Inc.

Another piece of useful information not found in the Osborne Executive Manuals is that when compiling a program using compiler toggle E, (used to trace program execution ie, debugging programs) the size of the resulting INT file is increased. To conserve space, Toggle E should not be used when finally compiling debugged programs.

----------AUG

[Continued from page 187]
be discussed, including correct posture and workstation environment (including lighting), keyboard techniques, exercises (from full body to facial and eye movements and what to do if the boss has doubts. This last point is the thorniest of all. Industrial problems are, in a perfect world, resolved through understanding and cooperation. Nothing is achieved by intransigent managements and employees shouting "compo" from behind a union banner. Industrial safety — and RSI falls into this category as clearly as a labourer in a fettling shop — is a two-way street.

If these notes have pointed to relevant experiences by members then for God's sake don't wait around for the next sonorous episode to appear in AUSNEWS. Seek advice NOW. Speak to colleagues; if you are in a union, approach your local representative and ask if there is a procedure to be followed in such circumstances. There are horror stories doing the rounds of employees being retrenched if RSI problems are suspected. It should never get to that stage. Overall, be cautious, in every respect. Just because you may have a persistent ache in the arm or neck, doesn't necessarily mean it's work-related or, for that matter, RSI. The object of the exercise is to remedy the problem. A lot of the onus for executing that remedy is with you.

----------AUG

OBIOSPT & OS1SET
by Mayling Hargreaves

I found OBIOSPT & OS1SET from FOG/OS1.002 excellent. OBIOSPT gives the options of having a flashing cursor, a screen dump, and a bleep when ²P is pressed to turn the printer on, very useful as often I don't know if the printer is switched on or not. The screen dump is handy as it will operate at times when it is not possible to use ²P. OS1SET enables you to change screen width, printer, baud rates, arrows etc.

[Continued from page 183]
b. Special Formats :
I just purchased AVBIOS v.5.3 and had one of my two Osborne 1-s converted to DSDD. This upgrade enables me to produce copies in numerous further SS/DS and SD/DD formats claimed to be readable by IBMPC, MORROW, KAYPRO and others. I have not yet checked this claim, but if verified, and if offered (later) it will attract a surcharge of $ 4.00, above the standard of $ 6.00.

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MS·DOS

Fred Mallia

As a forerunner of what is possible, if you support us (we do need encouragement you know). Here is a sample MS-DOS Column:

* * *

As a potential first issue of this column (its all rather tentative isn't it?) this reporter must make it painfully clear, that future issues depend entirely on contributions from members.

* * *

For those who insist on having things clearly defined, an MS-DOS Column shall mean: A reporting, of as yet indeterminate length, concerning matters of interest to 16 and 32 bit user's. Having made this statement, perhaps the MS-DOS title for this column isn't appropriate, after all the Apple Mackintosh is a 32 bit machine, as are some Microbees, etc., and neither run on PC/MS-DOS

* * *

Rumour has it that Fred Mallia has recently purchased a compatible (colour/ twin drives/ 20mb hard disk/ etc., etc., as is dying to show it off to anyone who cares to take a peek.

* * *

FOG which, of course, has an MS-DOS section within the group, publishes a separate newsletter for those members. It's called, rather appropriately, FOGLIGHT. Still in its infancy (Vol. 1 No. 7) FOGLIGHT still manages to be well worth reading - for example:

* * *

Wordstar Professional includes CorrectStar, an in-context spelling checker. It shows several lines of text highlights misspelled words. Corrections can be made from a suggestion or manually. The correction is entered and the paragraph reformatted automatically. The dictionary takes up about 300k on one disk.

* * *

If we do publish a column, should it have a name of its own - What? The editor awaits your suggestions. Do write to us, this whole newsletter, not just this column needs you to make it a success.

The first suggestion for a column title is, wait for it - METAMORPHOSIS - Kaphka eat your heart out - Maestro applause please. Seriously, we await your contributions - ideas not money.

* * *

The prompt is a little used PC/MS-DOS command and it allows you to customise the prompt - A> - that is displayed while in DOS. There are many ways you can set up the prompt.

With the special prompt characters, you can display the current subdirectory, the drive, the time, the date and/or the version of DOS that you are using.

You can also add any text string that you wished, to further customise the prompt. When entering characters the spaces are also included in the prompt. Here are some examples of prompts:

You type this:	You get this:
prompt p	C:±
prompt TIME = $T	TIME = 12:20:30.00
prompt Pg COMMAND	C:±> COMMAND
prompt MY COMPANY pg	MY COMPANY C:±>

The easiest way to proceed further with this is to put the prompt command into an AUTOEXEC.BAT file and it will be installed on all boot-ups from the disk or from your hard drive.

Beginners will find the pg prompt very helpful to prevent them from deleting files from the wrong directory. Here are the characters you will need:

```
$$  = $
$t  = current time
$d  = current date
$p  = current drive/directory
$v  = the DOS version
$n  = the default drive
$g  = greater than sign >
$l  = lesser than sign <
$b  = the ^ sign
$_  = a CR/LF (return/line feed)
$h  = a destructive backspace
$e  = ascii code X 1b hex (escape)
```

Finally, the $_ allows multi line prompts such as:

```
TIME = $t$_DATE = $d
```

which gives you the prompt:

```
TIME = 12:20:30.40 DATE = 01/02/86
```

We suggest you play with the prompt command until you find one you like. If you type prompt by itself it returns the default prompt,

* * *

The MODE command is used for a number of function including the redirection of output from the parallel printer port to the serial port. This function is well documented in the various manuals and handbooks on MS-DOS and takes the form:

```
MODE LPT1:=COM1
```

Ok, so far so good. But how do you now get the output redirected back out though the parallel printer port if you run both parallel and serial printers. Trevor Bird searched the manuals, handbooks and magazines high and low without finding a definitive statement. In desperation He asked at the last Group meeting and Kevin Bean thought he was sure he had struck the same problem and had noted it down at home. A phone call the following day and Kevin didn't have it on paper, however he had done some of the trial and error bit and found it was as simple as:

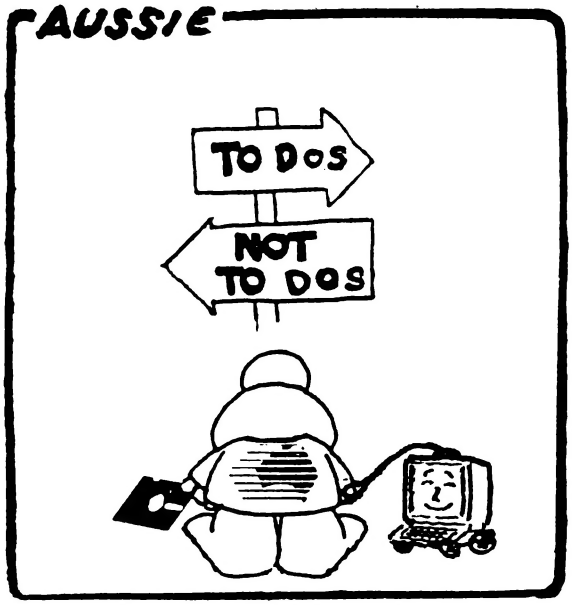
```
MODE LPT1:
```

Why o why is it not clearly documented. Now he can run two batch files to select his version of Wordstar to suit his selected printer. For his serial Brother printer his batch file (WSHR-25.BAT) is:

```
MODE LPT1:=COM1
WSHR1-25
```

and for his C. Itoh parallel printer his batch file (WSCITOH.BAT) is:

```
MODE LPT1:
WSCITOH1
```



With apologies to both the Bard and the Prince of Denmark, there is a body of opinion within this group, firmly convinced that we need to form an MS-DOS section. Those of us who believe this, also feel that we, as a computer user group, face inevitable extinction if we fail to do so.

The purpose of this section within AUSNEWS is to survey member's opinions. in short, how do we, as a group, best serve you, the members, and keep you active, interested and contributing.

To tell us what you want and need, we ask, nay plead, that you fill in the questionnaire and post it back to us at:

AUSEDUCATE
Ausborne User Group, P.O.
Box C530 Clarence Street,
SYDNEY NSW 2000.

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1. We do need an MS-DOS section [Y]es [N]o
2. If there was, I would become part of it Y N
3. I have already switched to MS-DOS Y N
4. I intend to do so in the near future Y N
5. I prefer CP/M, I'll never switch Y N
6. I can't switch, too much tied up in CP/M Y N
7. Do you use your computer for business? Y N
8. Pleasure / Hobby / Fun Y N
9. It doesn't matter if there's a MS-DOS section or not, What matters is the training sessions user groups offer - there aren't enough of these. Y N
10. I would come to training sessions if they were available. Y N
11. As a student? Y N
12. As an instructor. Y N
13. I don't want to be an instructor nor a student, but I can help out. Y N
14. I would come to training sessions and help others solve their problems. Y N
15. All I want from the group is Public Domain software. Y N
16. The main thing about the group is the hard copy library. Y N
17. I wish the group socialised more Y N
18. If yes to 17. - please indicate (tick appropriate box or, if d) tick and use this space, or see below).
    a) social evenings [ ]
    b) weekend outings [ ]
    c) country visits [ ]
    d) other (explain):
    .....
    .....
19. What the group needs, are sessions on:-
    a) Supercalc [ ]
    b) dBase II/III [ ]
    c) Wordstar [ ]
    d) CP/M [ ]
    e) PC/MS-DOS [ ]
    f) other (nominate) .....
    .....
20. We need to be broader that just PC/MS-DOS (after all there's Mackintosh) Y N
21. Coming to meetings/sessions isn't very useful. What is needed is am MS-DOS column in the newsletter. Y N
22. Are you prepared to pay more for all this? Y N
23. User pays, or all the membership? Y N
24. REMARKS: .....

Thank you for participating, its most important - (if the space is insufficient, please add a separate sheet). Now read on - and remember, this is just a sample. IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU.

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Incorporated in NSW
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Clarence Street
SYDNEY 2000
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NEXT MEETING

BURWOOD RSL CLUB
96 SHAFTSBURY RD
BURWOOD N.S.W.
20th August, 1986
6.30 pm